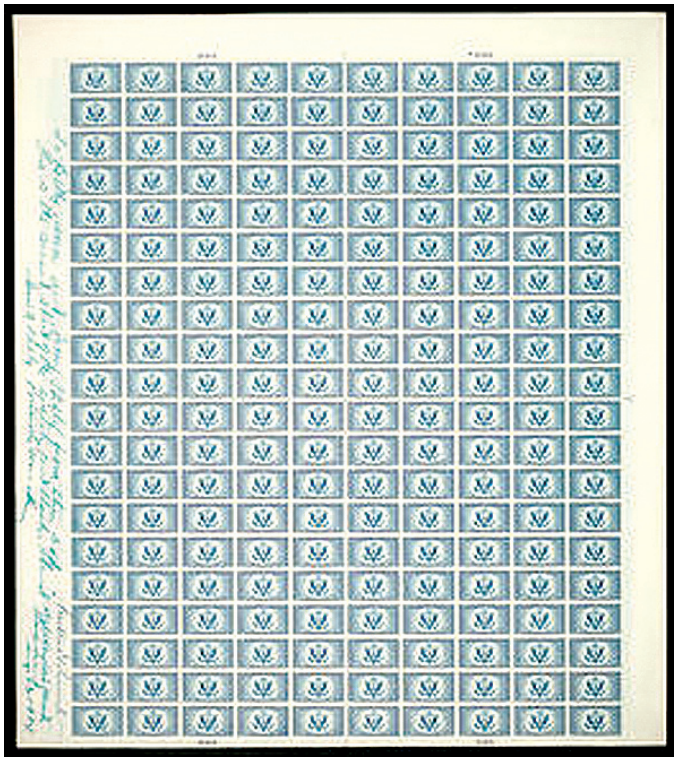
The Mekeel's Reference Manual

The Farley 16¢ Airmail Special Delivery, Scott 771



Above we show a complete sheet of 200 of the Airmail Special Delivery stamp that was issued on August 30, 1934. Unlike the stamps sold to the public, this sheet was not perforated and cut along the horizontal and vertical guide lines into four panes of 50 stamps each. Instead, the printing press was stopped, a few sheets removed, and presented to President Roosevelt and a few other members of the Administration. Although the stamps were paid for at the face value, their great scarcity would have made them worth thousands of dollars. This one is signed by James Farley and President Roosevelt and is part of the National Postal Museum Collection.

Thus it was that when the Farley sheets were made available to the public at face value, this Airmail Special Delivery stamp was included in those March 15, 1935 "Farley" issues, and designated as Scott number 771. [See cover photo and caption questioning this Scott number.]

Plates used to print the Farley issue was the same as for the CE1 perforated stamp, numbers 21312 through 21315.

Front and back of a hotel advertising cover addressed to Philadelphia, serviced at the American Air Mail Society Convention in Chicago on August 30, 1934, with an August 31 Philadelphia Special Delivery backstamp, also with an AAMS cachet on the front and the back.

Note that while this stamp is assigned Scott 771, this would seem to be inconsistent with the Scott numbering system. The perforated stamp, which paid the same Air/Special Delivery fee, was properly designated as CE1 (the first C—airmail—E—Special Delivery stamp). Thus, as a new version with the same function, Scott 771 actually should be designated as CE2, and what is now CE2 should be CE3. On our Manual page 3.CE01.1.100.100, we show an Airmail-Special Delivery usage very similar to this one.

For practical purposes, designating it as Scott 771 makes for a neat designation of the Farleys as running from Scott 752 through 771, without having to identify them as Scott 752 through 770 and CE2.

File Page 1.0771.1.100.100
Published 10/01/2015